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to come, so she stayed about the village. Her husband said he thought the child would be born to-morrow. 843

Aug. 12. Went to work in the taro garden and brought in a load of taro in the evening.

Aug. 13. Sat around most of the day, but brought in a load of firewood she could barely carry. When I said she ought not to have brought so much she laughed. Her husband said it would help the child to be born quickly.

Aug. 14. Did little besides household duties and getting firewood.

Aug. 15. Walked about five miles to a neighbouring village and the same distance back.

Aug. 16. Household duties, sat around most of the day. Brought firewood as usual.

Aug. 17. Did little besides cook taro and bring in wood. There seemed to be a definite drop in her abdomen, but she said she had no pain.

Aug. 18. No record, as I was away all day.

Aug. 19. She went with another woman and myself into the bush to gather canarium almonds. We went to a spot at least four miles from the village, and hunted for nuts in the fallen leaves for a couple of hours or more. Manĕv carried a heavy load of them home, and added half a dozen coco-nut shells full of water half-way back. [222]

Aug. 20. She went to the bush to get bread-fruit. During the day she felt ill and lay on the ground. One of the men in the party told me later that he thought the child was going to be born then and there. He told Manĕv she ought not to go to the bush any more.

Aug. 21. Sat around talking to me. Slept part of the day. Did the usual cooking and getting of firewood. Said she felt the child's movements, but was not in pain.

Aug. 22. Sat around, said the child's movements were making her uncomfortable. But she brought in firewood and did the cooking as usual. Towards evening she got some sand and spread it on the ground and lay down on it.

Aug. 23. Went with all the other villagers to the new taro garden for the ceremonial planting. Took over a load of taro stalks, and did some of the planting, which involved stooping continuously for hours at a time.

Aug. 24. Sat around. Did the usual cooking and getting wood.

Aug. 25. Sat around all day. At dusk went and lay on her side before the fire inside her hut, saying she had pains in her back. Her husband went and fetched his mother, and moved his own bed and a few personal belongings out of the hut into another close by. Labour pains continued all night, and were apparently severe. 844

Aug. 26. Child born at sunrise.

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BIRTH OF MANĒV'S CHILD

●844 As but few descriptions of parturition under primitive conditions are on record, I give in some detail the procedure followed at the birth of this child, as witnessed by me at the village of Tabut, August 25–6, 1930.

Pains started about sunset on August 25. Manēv complained that her back hurt, and lay down on a plank in the hut. She lay on her right side, with her back close to the fire. At first she retained her loin-cloth, but soon loosened it and then discarded it, remaining entirely naked until after the child was born.

Patchip, her husband, went to fetch his mother, and moved his own sleeping-plank out of the hut, which he had occupied with his wife up till that time, into a little hut near by, which also belonged to him. Had this not been available he would have gone to his relatives. His mother, whose name is Sanasi, came soon after, bringing some other women with her. Four of these stayed all night, as well as Sanasi. One had with her a baby a few months old, another had a child of a year or so, who also remained in the hut all night.

Sanasi's first instructions to Manēv were to come and sit close to the central pōle of the hut, and hang on to it. This she did, raising her arms as far as possible above her head, clasping the post, which was immediately behind her, and pulling on it, as Sanasi showed her. Presently a short log was brought, about 3 in. thick and about 2½ ft. long. She was told to leave the pole and sit on this log, in a posture with her knees bent and her legs separated. Sanasi knelt behind her on one knee, pressing the other knee into her back, and clasping both arms round her body just below the armpits, the clasped hands resting on the protuberant abdomen and pressing it downwards. Another woman sat in front and held her knees wide apart.

As the pains grew more severe, Manēv shrieked and cried, and tried to get up. At one time there were four women holding her, one behind her, as described above, one holding each knee and pressing it outwards, and one standing behind with her hands pressing on Manēv's shoulders, to keep her from springing up. At long intervals she was allowed a short respite, during which she lay on her side on the floor, but after a minute or two she was called back on to the log, and told that she must think of the child. Twice she vomited, but not violently.

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The five women present took turn about at holding her. The woman sitting behind her changed quite frequently. It must actually have been very tiring to maintain that position and keep up the pressure on her back. The other women sat or lay on the plank-beds in the hut, playing with the babies, or suckling them, chatting or dozing. This went on for five or six hours. Once in the course of this time there was an escape of fluid from the vagina, but very little in quantity.

Eventually the women became concerned that things were not progressing more quickly. There were whispers of 'a big child'. Then one of the women burrowed in the ground under the door (which was kept closed all the time and propped shut with a stick), and disinterred a coco-nut, still in its outer sheath. She took a knife and made several slashes in the coco-nut, without removing it from its sheath, and then threw it away into a corner of the hut. I could not make inquiries about this at the time, but Patchip subsequently gave me the following information. He had climbed a coco-nut tree while the pregnancy was still at an early stage, before the enlargement of the abdomen had become very noticeable, and had cut off two green coco-nuts. These he must not throw down on to the ground, as is done when coco-nuts are cut for ordinary drinking purposes, but he had to carry one in his hand and the other in his teeth as he climbed down. They were brought into the house, and their tops were cut off. Then he got some leaves of the tree called *wagag* (the same as that used in one of the prescriptions for barrenness), split off the midrib and broke it open. Taking out the pith from the split stem, he placed this pith in a fold of the leaf, making a kind of funnel. Some drinking-water was then poured through this funnel, passing through the pith as through a filter, into the coco-nuts, mixing with their own milk. The leaf of *wagag* must be thrown away into the sea immediately after being thus used, and the current must take it away. One of the coco-nuts was then heated in the fire, and the expectant mother drank the contents. The other was buried under the floor at the threshold of the hut in which she intended to be confined, and this was the one which was taken up and slashed during the course of her labour. This is done in order to hasten delivery. The object of burying it so carefully beforehand under the threshold is to prevent any one from making 'bad medicine' against the expectant mother so that she would die in child-

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844 birth. After the child is born the coco-nut is thrown away into the bush.

844 A short time after the episode of the coco-nut, Bunamon, one of the older women present, said they must give her some medicine.
824 One of the women went out, and presently returned with some fresh leaves from the trees called *ramian* and *reyto*. These Bunamon rolled in her hand, and squeezed the sap into half a coco-nut shell, finally dropping the leaves in also. A little water was added, and the coco-nut shell was given to Manēv, who drank the liquid
[276] it contained. Bunamon then chewed portions of the roots of the same plants with the betel-mixture, but using the leaves of the betel-pepper, not the fruit, which is more commonly used for chewing with areca-nut by these natives. She spat the resulting red saliva on to her hand and rubbed Manēv's abdomen with it, with a circular motion, all round the edge of the tumid belly. Then she rubbed some on her own big toe and applied the toe to Manev's vulva. Finally, she spat the solid remnant of the chewed mixture into the palm of her hand and put it into Manēv's mouth, telling her she must swallow it, which she did with evident effort.

844 Then another four or five hours passed, the women still holding Manēv as previously described. She appeared to be in great distress, and called out repeatedly: '*Atsat pio, atsat tagala!*' ('Woe is me', in the two dialects current in this village.) Once she called for her husband. No notice was taken by the women of any of her cries.

Once in a while the woman kneeling behind moved her clasping hands from the top of the protuberant abdomen to the bottom and shook it violently. This caused fresh cries and groans. Tears were streaming down Manēv's face, she begged continually to be let alone and to be allowed to lie down. Once they let her lie on the ground for a minute or two, and once they helped her to her feet, and she stood for a few seconds, supported by two women. But most of the time she sat on the log, with knees drawn up and pressed wide apart.

Towards morning they all came and sat in front of her, anxiously watching for the first sight of the child. As soon as the first glimmer of daylight appeared through the chinks in the walls of the hut, they put out the hurricane lantern I had brought with me, which up till then had faintly illumined the scene, so that when the top of the child's head at last appeared it was distinguished with diffi-

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culty in the dim light of dawn. It was an occipito-anterior presentation, and apparently normal. Sighs of relief and smiles of pleasant anticipation came from all the women.

The child was expelled on to a piece of areca-palm sheath spread on the ground between the mother's knees. Immediately it was delivered, the woman kneeling behind Manēv pressed heavily on her abdomen with her clasped hand, and pushed out the afterbirth, which was left attached to the child, the cord not being cut at this stage. The mother then stood up, and another woman tied a broad band of banana fibre tightly round her abdomen.

The child lay very still, giving no signs of life. The women looked at it and said: 'It is sick.' One said: 'It is dead.' Then one of them started to stamp with her foot on the piece of fibre on which the child lay, shaking it fairly violently. Another beat two sticks together, making as much noise as possible. I was given a stick and requested to rattle it on the floor. This was done, they told me, to frighten away the *urar* who was trying to kill the child. No one attempted to touch the infant. After a while its chest heaved a little. Immediately she saw this, its grandmother, Sanasi, warmed a finger and thumb at the fibre, and rubbed them along the umbilical cord, calling for a *kapi*-shell knife (black-lip oyster, used by women for peeling taro, &c., see Pl. 38, No. 3). This was produced and handed to Manēv, who was told to cut the cord, which she did, holding it with one hand and cutting it with the knife held in the other hand, while Sanasi held it taut. About three inches was left attached to the child. The cord was not ligatured, and nothing was done to the cut ends, but they did not bleed much.

The grandmother then took up the child and began to shake it. Putting her finger as far as she could into its mouth, she exhorted it to cry. 'Cry loudly.' For a few moments it made no sound. She took it by the heels and swung it backwards and forwards, face downwards. Presently a very feeble little wail came from it, and then it continued to cry, but not vigorously enough to please the women, who kept on telling it to cry louder, and Sanasi kept on pushing her finger into its mouth. Some cold water was then poured over head, back, and chest out of a coco-nut. No attempt was made to cleanse the child properly. Sanasi wiped its eyes with her finger, but not very thoroughly. Its cry was now sounding more healthy.

Meanwhile, Manēv, who seemed vigorous and active, had been

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844 digging a hole near the inner side wall of the hut. Into this she threw the afterbirth. The piece of areca-palm fibre on which it had been thrown after the cord was cut was then washed, and the water allowed to drip into the hole. Manēv then stood astride the hole, and water was poured over her, so that the blood from her genitals was washed into the hole. She then filled in the hole, and stood by watching what was being done to the child. After the water had been poured over it the grandmother handed the baby to its mother, who put it to her breast. It made an attempt to suck, but after a minute or two Sanasi took it away again, and renewed her attempts to make it cry, which it did still rather feebly.

844 824 Manēv then took the log she had been sitting on during the labour, and heated it in the fire without letting it burn. Then she applied it to her vulva, which was still bleeding. Presently she was given a handful of the large leaves of two plants, called *kō* and *wapatsūn*, which she held one by one in the smoke of the fire until they were hot, and then pressed to her abdomen. This was done to make the blood run out quickly and stop the pain. Then she lay down on a plank-bed near the fire.

The grandmother moulded the child's head with the palm of her hand, either bare or holding a heated leaf flat against her palm, which she pressed against the child's head. The back and sides of the head were pressed gently upwards, and the same kind of pressure was then given to the forehead. The nose was pinched to give it a bridge, and the cheeks pushed in. Eventually the child was laid on a woman's hood on the plank-bed beside its mother. It was soon suckling freely. It was given wads of taro, chewed first by its mother, on the same day.

142 It was a male child, and quite large. Its skin was of a colour difficult to describe, like a sallow white person's with a tinge of purple. The hut was too dark to take a 'colour top' reading. The nipples were much darker than the surrounding area, and were nearly black, as were also its penis and scrotum. There was no 'blue spot'. The hair was fairly thick, but not so thick as that of other children I saw at birth, neither was it so black. Its ends had a tendency to curl.

846 Mother and child spent the rest of that day, and the next three days, inside the hut, lying most of the time on the plank-bed near the fire. Patchip, the child's father, was not allowed to see his son for the first three days. He was obliged to remain in seclusion in

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the other hut, and was forbidden to do any work and especially strictly forbidden to handle a knife, axe, or other sharp instrument. If he did so, it is thought that the child would die. This prohibition applies to the mother also. Further, neither father nor mother might wash themselves, nor eat pig, fish, or opossum, which means that they were confined to a vegetarian diet. Patchip's mother cooked the food for them both.

On the morning of the fourth day (Aug. 29), Patchip took some leaves of the plant called *mayiyir*, a green leaf and a dry one, rubbed them in his hands, and squeezed them into a *kapi* shell. A little water was added, and taking the shell he went into the hut to make the acquaintance of his first-born, and to give him this 'medicine' to make him grow strong. He held the shell to the child's mouth. Afterwards, the leaves were carefully thrown away into the bush, but the shell which had been used to hold the mixture was carefully preserved in the hut. Medicine and other liquids will be given to the child in it during babyhood.

Patchip was anxious to perform on this day the ceremony removing the taboos under which he laboured, but the old women of the village said it was too soon, and persuaded him to defer it for a little while longer. He might now walk about the village, but no farther.

On the fifth day the child was washed in fresh water inside the hut. Its umbilical cord came off, and was preserved in a coco-nut shell containing lime for chewing with areca-nut, where it will remain until the child is grown up. The father and mother both went and washed in the sea. The child was not yet allowed to be taken outside the hut.

On the morning of the sixth day Patchip went into the hut carrying a large bush knife. With this he made several slashes at the child as it lay in its mother's arms, pretending to cut its head, limbs, and abdomen. This removed the taboo on holding a sharp instrument, and Patchip was then free to go to work, his period of couvade being over. Manĕv was also allowed to go to the taro garden, but did not do so that day.

After this mother and child took up the ordinary course of their lives. The child was thriving when I left five weeks later.

A NATIVE WOMAN'S DESCRIPTION OF A BIRTH

The Kurtatchi women followed the course of Manĕv's pregnancy with great interest, asking eagerly for details of its progress when

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I returned to my own house at intervals during my stay at Tabut. On one of these occasions, when we were discussing the subject, I got Matēv, herself the mother of six children, to give me an account of birth procedure, of which I give a literal translation. I did not interrupt Matēv with questions or comments in the course of this narrative, such explanations as were necessary being obtained afterwards. As it stands, it stresses the points which were uppermost in her mind, and were, therefore, presumably, considered of most importance, thus illustrating the native woman's point of view better than a more detailed and coherent statement obtained by less direct means would have done.

'The woman sits on a log. We tire ourselves out with working over the child. Now it hurts, its mother cries out, now we cut some leaves, we make her drink. Now the child is about to be born. Now she is afraid because the child hurts her. She cries out because of the child. Then I say: "You sit quietly, and your child will be born." We do like this (here Matēv went through motions indicating vigorous massage of the woman's abdomen). We shake the child. The child's head comes out first. All the women look. "Stay still, your child will be born easily. Don't break the child in your belly, if you do you will die."

'The woman is delivered of the child. The umbilical cord is fastened to the placenta. The placenta looks like liver. If the child's leg sticks in its mother's genitals, the mother holds her breath, then the child is ready to fall down. We get a coco-nut shell, we catch the blood, we carry it and throw it away in the bush.[1] We get water and pour it over the child, we wash the child. We take a shell-knife, we cut its umbilical cord, and put the afterbirth into a *kobu*. We bury it in the house. We make *poti* (a drink made of the oil from scraped coco-nut meat squeezed through banana fibre and then boiled) and *kariur* (the same but with some of the coco-nut scrapings added to the liquid). We fetch a bamboo full of water, we rub the woman's belly, we cut a leaf (the leaves used are those of the plant called *kō*, which are large and smooth), we make it hot, we warm the woman's belly. We warm the child. We take a piece of banana fibre, a large piece, and put it round the mother like a belt, then it warms her blood (the idea being that the blood will then run out easily and recovery be hastened). We

[1] It was afterwards explained that some people did this, but others preferred to bury all the blood in the house (as was done at the births witnessed by me).

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throw away the leaves into the sea, where the tide will carry them away. We get a green coco-nut, we make a drink for her. (The word used implies a cooked drink, perhaps 'soup' would be a fair translation.)

'The father of the child is forbidden to eat fish, pig, and opossum. He is forbidden intercourse with the mother of the child, they are forbidden to each other. The mother of the child is angry and strikes its father (if he tries to have intercourse with her). He goes to another woman (wife) in another house.

'Sometimes the child remains inside its mother's belly. Then we make *poti*. We say: "What is the matter with the child, that it stays inside, it does not fall down." Another woman is fetched, to help. Soup is made of green coco-nuts for the mother. She is afraid because the child remains inside her belly.

'Now another woman gives birth, and something goes wrong, and she dies. Or the child dies in the belly of its mother. The women ask: "What about this child?" The mother says: "I am still carrying this child." It is dead in its mother's belly. We put a hand into its mother's genitals and pull out the child, then the mother recovers, and the child alone dies.'

COMPLICATIONS OF CHILD-BIRTH

While listening to this narrative I was struck with the emphasis which was laid on the pain suffered by the parturient, and the possibility of complications arising followed by death of mother or child or both. It has so often been supposed that child-birth in the case of primitive people is easy and relatively painless. It seems to me that this is by no means general. The woman whose first delivery has been described in this chapter certainly appeared to suffer as much as, if not more than, many primiparae among ourselves, and it is very clear both from the stress laid on pain and fear in the account given by Matēv, and from remarks of other women, that among these people at any rate, child-birth is not such a simple affair as we have been led to believe. On another occasion a woman gave birth to a dead child after forty-eight hours of agony. The attendant women became very anxious after twenty-four hours had elapsed, but they could do nothing beyond massage and the administration of various concoctions of leaves and betel. I was told that there had been a woman at Kurtatchi, the grandmother of a boy still living there, who used to put her hand into

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845 the vagina during delivery and manipulate a mal-presentation—'suppose the leg came first', was the example spontaneously given to me. She used to chew some leaves with the betel-mixture and rub them on her hand before inserting it. My informant, a younger woman, did not know what these leaves were. She said that very few women knew how to do this; when it was done the child usually died but the mother got better, otherwise both child and mother died. Matēv, whose statement apparently refers to cases where there was reason to suspect that the child was already dead *in utero*, told me subsequently, in answer to a question, that she had never helped to deliver in this manner a child that was born alive.

163 It is quite impossible to obtain from the natives data sufficiently accurate to admit of calculating the relative frequency of death in child-birth. Several instances occur in my genealogies, but the possibility of errors of omission in that type of material is so great that I do not feel justified in using it for statistical purposes in this connexion.

● 844 824 Excessive bleeding appears to be very common. The women dread it, and there are many prescriptions for its prevention and control. The only one involving plants which could be identified runs as follows:

> Take the root of *bariur* (*Crinum asiaticum*) and the bark of *karū* (*Barringtonia* sp.) and pound them together. Put the pulp into a pot and pour sea-water over it. Heat some stones and throw them into the pot. The woman must sit over the pot so that the steam reaches her genitals. She must also drink some of the water. Then her blood will dry up and she will be all right and will not be ill.

Of the others, some are used in similar fashion, in other cases the leaves are made hot and pressed on the lower part of the abdomen, or are chewed with the betel-mixture, some being swallowed, and the abdomen massaged with the remainder.

163 164 Miscarriages seem to be frequent, and still-births by no means rare. In discussing this question with Government medical officers it was suggested that the prevalence of malaria was probably at least in part responsible for this.

844 On the other side of the picture, there are, of course, many confinements where delivery is quick and easy. Another woman of Tabut, who had promised that I should be present at her labour, gave birth to her child before it was expected, and so quickly that no one in the village was called or knew anything about it till the

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next morning. This was her third confinement, and in discussing it the women told me that she was a woman who 'knew how to have children'. 844

In the course of many talks on these matters, with both men and women, I obtained further information, supplementary to that which I was able to gather from personal observation, bearing on various aspects of pregnancy and child-birth. The following paragraphs summarize the data thus collected. In many cases the statements were made more than once, by different people, and often in different villages.

PREPARATIONS FOR DELIVERY

Of all the medicines in my collection intended for use in connexion with child-birth, only one is given to the mother before labour actually begins. It is said to ensure easy delivery, but no explanation was forthcoming as to how this was achieved. 844 824

Manigar (a sweet-scented plant of the *Cymbopogon* species, similar to that used in India for making citronella oil).

Take a dry leaf that has fallen to the ground. Powder it between the hands and put it into a coco-nut shell. Pour in a little water, and make the woman drink it when she feels that the time of birth is near. Put the coco-nut in the house. Next day add a little more water and make her drink again. Twice is enough.

No special preparations are made for confinement, except the provision of a log for the parturient to sit on, and a piece of banana fibre or an areca-palm sheath (*kōbū*) on to which the child is expelled at birth.

There are no professional midwives. There is usually at least one woman in a village who makes a point of being present at every birth that takes place there, but this appears to be of her own accord and not by invitation. Some women have a reputation of being more skilful in handling the situation than others, and these may be sent for if difficulties arise, but usually some relative of the expectant mother or of her husband takes the lead, assisted by any women who care to come in. Young women who have not yet borne a child ought not to witness a difficult labour, lest their own first pregnancy should thereby be rendered correspondingly difficult. 844

No men are permitted to enter the hut in which the woman is confined, from the time the pains begin. The husband may not

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844 enter it for three days after the birth of the child, and other men only after he has done so. But the latter part of this prohibition is not always strictly observed.

844 824 There are a number of medicines which are used to hasten a delivery if the women who are watching think it is unduly protracted. The following is typical:

Pupūna (*Pteris tripartita* Sw.)

Take some of the leaves, heat them, and rub them on the woman's abdomen. Squeeze the sap into water and give it to her to drink.

The use of other plants for the same purpose has been described in the account of the birth of Manēv's child. One more may be mentioned because it seems to be comparable with our use of an anodyne:

Wanōnō (*Erythrina*, 'the coral tree').

When the woman feels that the pains are very severe, rub the leaves between your hands, mix them with water, and give the water to her to drink; it will lessen the pain.

A number of other plants which may be given to facilitate delivery could not be identified from my specimens. They are used in similar fashion to those above described, or in some cases are chewed with the betel-mixture and rubbed on the woman's abdomen. To the account of the use of one of these my informant added: 'If when the plant is pulled up it is found to have a forked root, the woman is carrying twins.' [787 845]

RESTRICTIONS ON SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

843 There is no taboo on sexual intercourse right up to the time of child-birth, but in practice it is discontinued towards the end of the pregnancy, though the husband may continue to occupy the same hut until the pains begin.

846 After the birth, intercourse with the mother is strictly interdicted. The duration of this period of abstinence was described to me in various ways: 'Until the child can run about.' 'Until the child begins to talk.' The criterion most frequently cited was: 'Until the child has yaws.' This tropical skin disease falls to the lot of every child, usually between one and two or three years of age. I estimate that, in general, intercourse is not resumed until the child is at least two years old. There is no taboo on the husband's [164]

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CUSTOMS CONCERNING FOOD

843 262 During pregnancy a woman may not eat the megapode (*iowa*) nor the fish called *turō*. Her husband should also observe this rule. No reason was given for this taboo. The woman must also abstain from a sea-creature called *awaian*, which is described as like a little snake, and living among the stones in the sea. This taboo would appear to have arisen for a reason like that which forbids a pregnant Trobriand woman to eat certain kinds of fish: 'Just as it is difficult to haul these fish out of their hiding-places, so the baby would not easily be brought forth.' (Malinowski, 1929, p. 193.) A pregnant 843 262 825 woman must on no account eat a certain frog called *toktok*, which frequents banana palms. It has unusually long legs, and it is thought that if she eats it her child will have legs of abnormal length.[1] Another kind of frog, *kakō*, which lives in pools in the bush, is specially recommended; if she eats it her child will be large and the period of pregnancy pass easily.

844 262 While labour is in progress the husband must abstain from food of any kind. The woman's mother, whether present at the confinement or not, must abstain from eating pig.

846 262 After the birth, for an indeterminate period ('while the baby is very small'), the parents may not eat pig, fish, opossum, shell-fish, or barringtonia fruit. Why the last-named should be included my informants did not know. The effect of the other prohibitions is to confine the parents to a vegetarian diet; this is thought to be of [276 824] advantage to the child. The mother is subjected to further restrictions. She must chew with her areca-nut only the leaf of the betel-pepper, not touching the catkin-like fruit, which is much preferred in the ordinary way. The reason given for this change is that the fruit is stronger than the leaf, and might harm the mother's milk. The nursing mother must also abstain from bananas and canarium almonds. While awaiting Manēv's confinement I was frequently given presents of both these things, which I shared with the expectant mother, to her great enjoyment, but her friend, Ema, who was constantly with us, would never accept any, saying that she was forbidden to eat them because she had a suckling child.

The mother's first meal after her confinement is the occasion of peculiar care. It consists of soup (*siro*), i.e. the water in which the

[1] Little girls are taught by their mothers to avoid this creature. Any unmarried person who eats it will not find favour with the opposite sex.

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846 The reason given for this practice was that as the father had 'made the child come up', he was responsible, as well as the mother, for its well-being during birth and for the first few days of its life, and that these precautions were taken to ensure this. The death of a two-days'-old child at Kurtatchi was attributed by all to the fact that the father, a young man of 'advanced' views, had refused to keep the couvade rules. The custom is a clear acknowledgement [851 848] of responsibility for the child on the part of the father. There is no couvade for a child born as the result of extra-marital intercourse.

TREATMENT OF NEW-BORN CHILD

● 844 824 The umbilical cord (*busō*) is never severed until the afterbirth has been expelled. If the expulsion of the afterbirth is delayed overlong, the root of the plant *pupuna* is brought, and chewed with the betel-mixture, the resulting mass is spat out and rubbed on to the big toe of one of the assistant women. She then pushes with her toe on the abdomen of the parturient, at the level of her umbilicus. They say this loosens the placenta and causes it to be expelled.

844 The child is left lying, still attached to the placenta, on the piece of fibre on to which it was expelled, until it shows signs of life. All the women look on anxiously, but no one touches it as long as it remains motionless. It seems probable that this custom may sometimes lead to the death of a child who might have been saved had prompt measures been taken. As soon as the slightest movement is perceived the cord is cut. The mother herself, if she is able, is considered the proper person to do this. It should be measured to the child's knee, and cut at that level; they say that if it is cut closer to the child's body the umbilicus will swell up and be painful, [732] and will afterwards project. (Very many children show signs of umbilical hernia.) The cut end is not treated in any way. It is left 846 attached to the child until it drops off naturally. In some cases which came under my observation, this seemed to occur much sooner than would be expected, for instance on the second day after birth. It is preserved in the lime-pot which contains the mother's supply of powdered lime for chewing with areca-nut. There it will remain till the child is grown up, unless the child dies, when it will be taken out and buried in the house. It is usually allowed to remain in the lime-pot, covered by the powder, indefinitely, unless some one finds it by accident, and asks: 'Aren't you going to throw away

here described as nearly as I could ascertain in the order in which they would be performed.

1. *At birth.*

While a woman *tsunaun* is in labour, every one in the village abstains from food. As soon as the child is born, the slit-gong is beaten, and a feast is held, with food provided by the child's relatives. Any one connected with the child, both on its mother's and its father's side, will contribute food, and the more food provided the greater is the prestige. The food is distributed among the people of the village, and there is a *kōma* that night. For the birth of a commoner there is no general fasting, no slit-gong, no feast, and no *kōma*.

2. *At first washing.*

All the people of the village, both men and women, must abstain from eating pig and fish till the child is washed on the fifth day. Then a pig is killed, and cooked in a pot, not roasted as is the general method of cooking pigs for feasts. All the women prepare large quantities of taro. A fire is made, small pieces of taro, pig, and fish are placed in the fire, and the *urar* of all the important people of the child's clan, not only those who died long since, but also those who have not long been dead, are called upon by name, with the adjuration:

'Komu tsura, nom en a tamū, a ta gū, a ta ien, sa
Here is fire, you eat taro, pig, fish, so that
naban en sas ta ta ien to babēn ner, a ta gū mē.'
the people (may) eat again fish forbidden, pig also.

The *urar* hear this; they come and eat what has been burned. This lifts the taboo on eating flesh foods for the people of the village and for the child's relatives, except its parents.

3. *In the early days.*

'While it is still a new baby', there is a ceremony involving those of its relatives who stand to the child in the relationship called *watʃitʃio*, in particular its mother's mother's brother's daughters. The men of the village go out on to the reef and catch a number of the tiny fish called *karios*. These are about the size of a large minnow, and are usually regarded as not worth catching, except by small children for fun. They are brought to the child's hut,

Birth and Children

In Buka and north Bougainville, as far as I could ascertain, there are no special ceremonies when a child is born. In south Bougainville a great feast (called marromarro) is prepared during pregnancy by the women of the community whereby numerous dishes play an important rôle. This feast is celebrated outside of the village; the husbands are not allowed to be present, but the women are kind enough to send them an abundant portion of the delicacies they serve; cuscus (a phalanger) roast is especially preferred on these occasions. If a son is born to a chieftain, this is the occasion for special celebrations. Neither the infant nor the mother is permitted to leave the hut until the child is 1 1/2 to 2 years old. Then great amounts of food are prepared, and on a certain day a great feast takes place accompanied by dancing and singing. On this occasion the son and mother come out into the light of day and are admired and marveled at. In Buka and north Bougainville a similar ceremony takes place, but only when the boy is 7 to 8 years old. He is not kept inside until the time of this festivity, but can move about as he pleases within and outside the hut. The feast consists of a colossal meal, and a special dance (called hesinna) is connected with it. Also a special song is rendered by the dancers that begins with the words: lili a manu etc. (for the song as well as the music cf. the relevant chapter). The singers and dancers form a broad circle, and each one holds in his hand an approximately 1 1/2 meter long bamboo cane, the lower end of which is closed by one of the natural segments of the reed. In tempo with the melody they move in a circle and at the same time strike the bamboo cane (called zekull) on the ground, producing a hollow roaring sound.

Infanticide and abortion -- horrible practices that are still quite widespread even today on the Solomon Islands situated farther to the southeast -- do not occur here so extensively. [9] A proof of this is the great number of children that one encounters everywhere in the villages in Buka and Bougainville. When more peaceful conditions finally come about, this population will surely increase rapidly. As the situation stands today, the numerous feuds and, connected with them, the unstable life in the open, are not factors that contribute to population increase.